

KEVIN CLARK

Separation

i

The morning mist unveils
six sheep
and a single white hen
standing still in the first acre.

The hen is old, produces
no eggs. She stands among the great
grey legs, content,

pondering grass.
Only the mist moves.

ii

Midmorning. We hold
each other, dancing.
When the record ends, silence

lowers from the ceiling
and we are still.

iii

Our words cannot enter
the long quiet.
It has been two weeks.

You go to the window. You say
the sheep are beautiful, and
the hen, it thinks
it is one of them, look
at the way it grazes in their circle.

Finally

it is decided: one of us
will leave.

our hands shivering
in jacket pockets, we
study the clouds
of the sheeps' breath. We
are surprised to see the hen
alive in the frigid morning
of the last day. We
circle the house, twigs
beneath the window
cracking under foot. We
stare inside.